

**NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

BRUSH MANAGEMENT

(Ac.)

CODE 314

DEFINITION

Removal, reduction, or manipulation of non-herbaceous plants.

PURPOSE

This practice may be applied to accomplish one or more of the following purposes:

- restore natural plant community balance
- create the desired plant community
- reduce competition for space, moisture, and sunlight between desired and unwanted plants
- manage noxious woody plants
- restore desired vegetative cover to protect soils, control erosion, reduce sediment, improve water quality and enhance stream flow.
- maintain or enhance wildlife habitat including that associated with threatened and endangered species
- improve forage accessibility, quality and quantity for livestock
- protect life and property from wildfire hazards
- improve visibility and access for handling livestock

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

On rangeland, native or naturalized pasture, and pasture and hay lands where removal or reduction of excessive woody (non-herbaceous) plants is desired.

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable For All Purposes.

Brush management will be designed to achieve the desired plant community in woody plant density, canopy cover, or height.

Brush management will be applied in a manner to achieve the desired control of the target woody species and protection of desired species. This will be accomplished by mechanical, chemical, biological, prescribed burning or a combination of these methods.

On grazing land, Prescribed Grazing (528A) shall be applied to ensure desired response from treatments.

Additional Criteria For Improving Wildlife Habitat.

Brush management will be planned and applied in a manner to meet the habitat requirements of the wildlife of concern.

Brush management will be planned in a manner that will not adversely affect threatened or endangered species or their habitats.

Additional Criteria For Reducing Wildfire Hazards.

Control undesirable woody plants in a manner that creates the desired plant community and sufficiently reduces wildfire hazard conditions.

CONSIDERATIONS

Timing and sequence of brush management in a pasture and/or the entire operating unit should be planned to ensure needed grazing management.

Consider soil erosion potential and difficulty of vegetation establishment when choosing a method of control that causes soil disturbance.

Consider impacts on wildlife cover, food, and shelter.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Plans and specifications will be prepared for each pasture, field, or management unit where brush management will be applied.

Plans and specifications will be based on the practice standard and may include narratives, maps, drawings, job sheets, or similar documents. These documents will contain the following data as a minimum:

- Brush canopy and/or species count, transect line locations and percent canopy and/or species numbers per acre of the target plant(s).
- As needed, maps or drawings showing areas to be treated and areas to be left undisturbed should be prepared.

For mechanical treatment methods, plans and specifications will include types of equipment and any modifications necessary to enable the equipment to adequately complete the job. Also included should be:

- dates of treatment
- operating instructions
- techniques or procedures to be followed

For chemical treatment methods, plans and specifications will include:

- herbicide name
- rate of application or spray volumes
- acceptable dates of application
- mixing instructions (if applicable)
- any special application techniques, timing considerations, or other factors that must be considered to ensure the safest, most effective application of the herbicide
- reference to label instructions

For biological treatment methods, plans and specifications will include:

- kind of biological agent or grazing animal to be used
- timing, duration, and intensity of grazing or browsing
- desired degree of grazing or browsing use for effective control of target species
- maximum allowable degree of use on desirable non-target species
- special precautions or requirements when using insects or plants as control agents

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Operation: Brush management practices shall be applied using approved materials and procedures. Operations will comply with all local, State, and Federal laws and ordinances.

Success of the practice shall be determined by evaluating regrowth or reoccurrence of target species after sufficient time has passed to monitor the situation and gather reliable data. Evaluation periods will depend on the methods and materials used.

Maintenance: Following initial application, some regrowth, resprouting, or reoccurrence of brush should be expected. Spot treatment of individual plants or areas needing retreatment should be done as needed.